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UNCLAS VIENNA 001136

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/ACE AND EUR/AGS

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SUBJECT: NEW EURASIA FOUNDATION DEMARCHE: AUSTRIAN RESPONSE

REF: STATE 44003

1. On April 7, Econ Unit Chief met with Ingrid Sager, Head of the MFA's Eastern European Development Assistance Division, to encourage Austrian participation in the New Eurasia Foundation (FNE). Sager said that Austria, unfortunately, would not contribute to the FNE. She added that, because of its limited resources, the GoA concentrated its official development assistance (ODA) on priority countries. The GoA's 2005 ODA budget for the region (Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Balkans) was only Euro 15 million, and the western Balkan nations received the bulk of these funds. The GoA had decided, however, to increase its assistance to Moldova to Euro 700,000 in 2005. Sager noted that the GoA does provide approximately Euro 200,000-300,000 of support to Austrian NGOs partnering with indigenous NGOs in the CIS area. Sager said that while ODA to the region was "below average," Austrian commercial activity in Eastern Europe had been very much "above average" for over a decade. Brown